

Jefferson County Care Transitions Coalition – Presents



DYSPHAGIA DIETS AND THICKENED LIQUIDS

Caring for those in home settings

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1 Pureed

- Foods are pureed, of uniform consistency, and cohesive
- No biting or chewing is required
- Typically eaten with a spoon and unable to be drunk from a cup
- No lumps
- Liquid must not separate from solid
- Packaged pureed foods are available for purchase
- Be aware of recommended liquid consistency

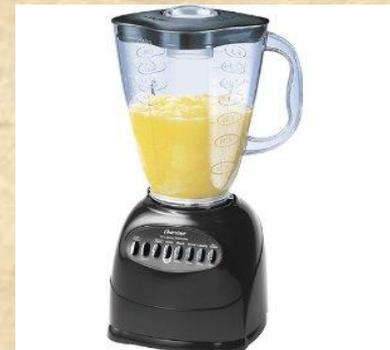
National Dysphagia Diet Level 1 Pureed

■ Grains

- Cooked cereals such as cream of wheat (ok to serve as is) or oatmeal (run oats through blender before cooking)
- Moist, gelled (instructions to follow), and blended grain products
 - Pancakes, waffles, pasta

■ Fruits

- Puree
- No skins
- No grapes, pineapple, or citrus fruits



National Dysphagia Diet Level 1

Pureed

■ Proteins

- Pureed meats served with thick gravy
- Scrambled and pureed eggs
- Pureed egg salad or chicken salad without onion or celery
- Cheese sauce
- Use caution with melted cheese that gets rubbery as it cools

■ Dessert

- Ice cream, pudding, jello, shakes, smoothies
- Avoid nuts or seeds
- Bread products (e.g., cakes, cupcakes) require extra preparation
 - No cookies or brownies
- Be aware of thickened liquids when it comes to desserts that melt (e.g., ice cream, jello)

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1

Pureed

- Vegetables
 - Well-cooked vegetables, then puree
 - May need to use stabilizer to avoid liquid separating from solid
- Other food ideas
 - Pureed pasta with pureed meat sauce
 - Puree the two items separately
 - Plain or vanilla yogurt
 - No fruit yogurt
 - Mashed potatoes or mashed sweet potatoes with gravy/butter
 - Pureed, strained soups

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1

Pureed

- Tips for making pureed foods
 - Blend one food at a time to maintain flavor and color, rinsing the blender with hot water between foods
 - Use a stabilizer, such as bread crumbs, protein powder, beverage thickener, or potato flakes, to add “stickiness” or cohesiveness to the food
 - Stabilizer keeps the liquid from separating from the solid
 - Fruit
 - Watery vegetables, such as green beans, spinach, or lettuce
 - Soups, shakes, or smoothies if on thickened liquids

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1

Pureed

■ Tips continued

- Use olive oil, mayonnaise, tartar sauce, ketchup, mustard, sour cream, cream cheese, or melted butter to keep foods (especially meat) moist and cohesive
- Use a pulsing action on the blender to puree meats and fresh fruits (without seeds or skin)
- Cook vegetables extremely well before pureeing
- Puree noodles when hot
- Puree noodles separately from the sauce to maintain a more normal appearance of the food

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1

Pureed

- Bread
 - Does not puree well
 - Substitute potatoes or pureed pasta
 - Make gelled or slurried bread/bread products
 - See instructions under Special Topics

National Dysphagia Diet Level 1 Pureed



National Dysphagia Diet Level 2

Mechanically Altered

- Foods are soft and moist
- No liquid separates from the solid
- Small lumps visible within the food, easy to squish with the tongue (1/4")
- Can be scooped and shaped into a ball
- No biting required
- Minimal chewing required
- Any Level 1 item is also allowed

National Dysphagia Diet Level 2

Mechanically Altered

■ Grains-

- Cooked cereals cream of wheat and oatmeal
- Cold flake or crispy rice cereals
 - Add $\frac{1}{2}$ c milk, let stand at least 2 minutes until soft. Drain excess milk and serve.
- Pancakes that are minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces and soaked in syrup
- Bread/bread products as described for Level 1
- Well-cooked noodles minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces

■ Fruits

- Canned fruits minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces and drained of excess juice
- Ripe bananas minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces (yellow to slightly brown peel)

National Dysphagia Diet Level 2

Mechanically Altered

■ Proteins-

- Tender, well-cooked meats minced in ¼" pieces served with thick gravy
- Cottage cheese
- Baked beans mashed with the tines of a fork
- Soft-cooked scrambled eggs
- Egg salad or chicken salad with no celery or onion, minced in ¼" pieces

■ Dessert

- Smooth or pureed desserts
- Avoid nuts or seeds
- Bread products require extra preparation
- Be aware of thickened liquids when it comes to desserts that melt (e.g., ice cream, jello)

National Dysphagia Diet Level 2

Mechanically Altered

- Vegetables
 - Well-cooked vegetables mashed with the tines of a fork or cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces
 - Puree corn and broccoli
- Other food items
 - Yogurt
 - May have fruit yogurt
 - Well-cooked pasta minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces with sauce
 - Any meat or vegetables in the sauce need to be well-cooked and minced in $\frac{1}{4}$ " pieces
 - Soups with tender chunks smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$ "

National Dysphagia Diet Level 2 Mechanically Altered



National Dysphagia Diet Level 3 Soft

- Soft, tender, and moist throughout
- Liquid doesn't separate from solid
- Chewing is required
- Knife is not required to cut food
- Bite size is 1/2" pieces
- Food can be mashed or broken down with pressure from a fork or spoon
- Any Level 1 and 2 items are also allowed

National Dysphagia Diet Level 3

Soft

■ Grains

- Hot cereals without modification
- Cold cereals soaked in a $\frac{1}{4}$ " cup of milk and drained before serving
- Pancakes cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces and soaked in syrup
- Bread/bread products must be gelled before serving
- Well-cooked noodles cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
 - Macaroni and cheese without modification

■ Fruits-

- Canned and cooked fruits without seeds or skins
 - Canned fruits need to be drained
- Soft and peeled fresh fruit
 - Ripe banana (yellow to slightly brown peel)
 - Ripe berries
 - Ripe melon (cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces with a fork, no watermelon)

National Dysphagia Diet Level 3

Soft

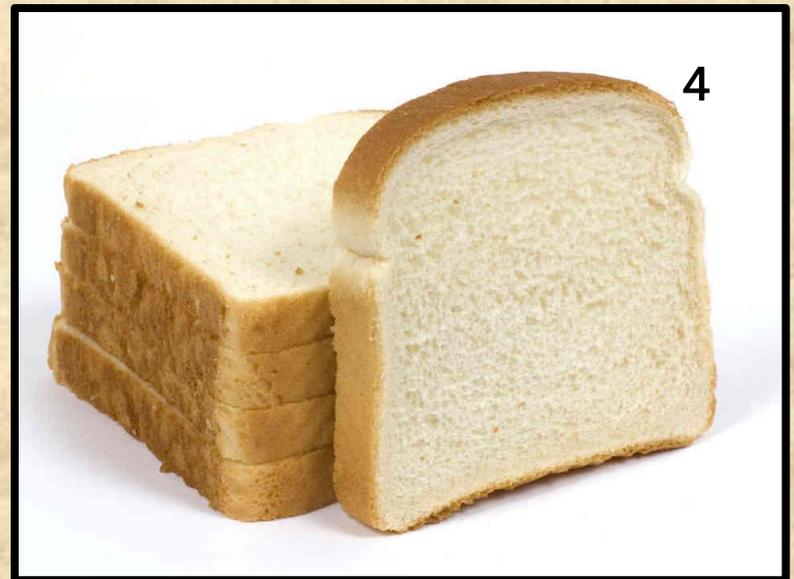
- Vegetables
 - Well-cooked vegetables cut in ½” pieces with a fork
 - Puree corn and broccoli
- Proteins
 - Tender meats in ½” pieces served with gravy or sauce
 - Lunch meat cut in ½” pieces without tough or stringy pieces
 - Tuna, egg, or chicken salad
 - No celery or onion
 - All pieces must be smaller than ½”
 - If served as a sandwich, serve it open-faced on gelled slice of bread and cut in ½” pieces

National Dysphagia Diet Level 3 Soft

■ Dessert

- Most desserts that do not do not contain nuts, seeds, or dried fruit
- Soft cookies
- Followed instructions to gel bread products before serving

National Dysphagia Diet Level 3 Soft



Tips

- Add protein and calories in the following ways
 - Fortify milk by adding 2 c dry powdered milk to 1 quart of liquid milk
 - Use the fortified milk when making hot creamed soups, sauces, milkshakes, fruit smoothies, hot cereals, mashed potatoes, hot chocolate, or pudding
 - Add margarine, sugar, honey, jelly, sour cream, half-and-half, heavy cream, whole milk, mayonnaise, avocado, or pureed baby food to increase calories
 - Add strained baby fruit to juices, milkshakes, smoothies, or cooked cereals
 - Add 1 jar strained baby meat to soup, sauces, and gravies
 - Mix strained baby meat with cooked, pureed vegetables

Tips

- Add protein and calories in the following ways
 - Add 2-4 T canned coconut milk or cream to smoothies, shakes, cereals, yogurt, rice, or diced chicken
 - Choose cream-based soups rather than broth-based
 - Pudding or custard rather than gelatin for dessert
 - Add sauces, gravies, or extra oil to your meals
 - Make shakes or smoothies with yogurt or ice cream
 - Use ice cubes made of milk or fruit nectar instead of water
 - Drink egg nog or nutritional supplements instead of milk
 - Add honey to smoothies, tea, yogurt, hot cereals, shakes or ice cream

Tips

- Add protein and calories in the following ways
 - Add tofu to cooked vegetables, soups, or smoothies
 - Add cooked eggs (puree) as needed) to your soups, broths, or cooked vegetables
 - Substitute plain Greek yogurt for sour cream
 - Add cheese to soups, cooked eggs, vegetables, and starches (e.g., ricotta, cottage cheese)
 - Add dried milk powder to purees and smoothies
 - Add juice to prepared fruit, cereal, milkshakes, or smoothies
 - Add nut butters to shakes or smoothies
 - Eat small, frequent meals or snacks

Tips

- How to thin foods
 - Add hot milk-based liquids (milk, cream) to pureed soups, pureed vegetables, or cooked cereal
 - Add other hot liquids (broth, gravy, sauce, butter) to mashed potatoes, pureed or ground meats, or chopped vegetables
 - Add cold milk-based liquids to cream, yogurt, cold soup, pureed fruits, pudding, or custard

- Specific examples
 - Broth
 - Bouillon
 - Gravy
 - Juice
 - Liquid flavored gelatin
 - Milk
 - Plain yogurt
 - Melted hot butter
 - Strained pureed soups

Tips

- How to thicken food and liquid
 - Commercial thickeners
 - For hot food or liquid, use
 - Baby rice, potato flakes, mashed potatoes, or flaked baby cereal
 - For cold food or liquid, use
 - Unflavored gelatin, pureed fruits, or banana flakes
 - For pureed soups, use
 - Potato flakes, mashed potatoes, thick sauces or gravies, or baby food meat
 - For pureed fruits, use
 - Flaked baby cereal, flavored gelatin, or cooked cream of rice or wheat cereal
 - For pureed vegetables, use
 - Mashed white or sweet potatoes, potato flakes, or sauces

Tips

- Specific examples of thickeners
 - Baby cereal
 - Banana flakes
 - Bread crumbs
 - Cornstarch
 - Cooked cereals (e.g., cream of wheat or rice)
 - Custard mix
 - Graham cracker crumbs
 - Gravy
 - Instant potato flakes
 - Mashed potatoes
 - Plain, unflavored gelatin powder
 - Plain sauces (white, cheese, tomato)
 - Baby food fruits (smooth puree)
 - Baby food vegetables (smooth puree)
 - Baby food meats (smooth puree)
 - Saltine cracker crumbs

Special Topics

Soup

- Level 1
 - Puree all soups and strain to insure there are no chunks
 - May need to be thickened if on thickened liquids
 - Cream-based soups are naturally nectar thick but will need thickener if on honey thick liquids
 - Broth-based soups need thickener added for nectar and honey consistencies
- Level 2
 - Chunks must be very tender and smaller than 1/2"
 - Follow Level 1 guidelines for thickening
- Level 3
 - Chunks must be very tender and smaller than 1"
 - Follow Level 1 guidelines for thickening

Special Topics

Bread

- Bread
 - Does not puree well
 - Is not allowed on any dysphagia diet without first modifying
 - Includes bread products
 - Muffins
 - Cakes
 - Cupcakes
 - Scones
 - Biscuits/dinner rolls
 - Doughnuts

Special Topics

Bread

- Gelled bread instructions

1. 1 cup juice/broth/water/syrup or any combination of them and 1.5 tsp unflavored gelatin powder
2. Pour 2-4 T of the gelatin mixture over each slice of bread/bread product
3. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours. Do not let the cover/lid touch the bread.

Special Topics

Bread

- Slurried bread instructions
 1. Cover bread/bread product with sauce, gravy, or syrup
 2. Mix the two items until the bread product begins to dissolve into a slurry

Special Topics

Avoid

Avoid on all dysphagia diets

- Peanut butter
- Stir-fried vegetables
- Rice
- Seeds, nuts
- Grapes
- Citrus fruit
- Dried fruit
- Pineapple
- Skin on fruit
- Bread/bread products (unless gelled instructions are followed prior to serving)
- Bagels and English muffins
- Broccoli and corn (unless served as a smooth puree)

Special Topics

Dry Mouth

- Choose soft, moist foods
- Add gravy, sauce, or applesauce
- Have a spoonful of warm soup or other liquid between mouthfuls of food
- Try foods prepared with gelatin, such as mousse
- Carry a bottle of water with you
- Try carrying a small, clean spray bottle filled with water
- Sugar-free mints or gum

Thickened Liquids

- Multiple types and brands of beverage thickener on the market
 - Pre-thickened liquids are also available online
- Available at pharmacies, medical equipment stores, and online
- No prescription required to purchase
- Cost is not covered by Medicare

Thickened Liquids

Powdered thickener

- Starch-based or gum-based
- Examples: Thicken Up, Thick-it, or a drug store may carry its own brand
- Follow instructions for mixing provided on the can
- 1-5 minutes until beverage has reached accurate consistency
- Can leave a beverage lumpy
- Starch-based thickeners often cause the beverage to thicken further as the beverage stands and cause carbonated beverages to lose carbonation
- Gum-based thickeners are a little more costly and can work better with carbonated beverages and with allowing drinks to maintain initial consistency

Thickened Liquids

Gel thickener

- Examples: SimplyThick, Gelmix
- Follow package instructions for accurate mixing
- More costly than powdered thickeners
- Require vigorous shaking to mix thoroughly
- Work well with carbonated beverages
- Maintain consistency over time, even when refrigerated
- No wait-time to reach accurate consistency
- Easier to mix a drink accurately than with powdered thickeners

Thickened Liquids

Pre-thickened liquids

- Examples: Simply Thick, Thick-it
- Available online only
- Offer the convenience of not having to mix your own beverages to an accurate consistency
- Most costly option for thickened liquids

Thickened Liquids

Special Considerations

- Soup
 - Please reference Special Topics under dysphagia diets
- Desserts
 - Popsicles, ice cream, and jello melt to a thin liquid
 - Avoid these items when on thickened liquids
 - This includes shakes/smoothies made with ice cream
 - If you are going to serve a shake/smoothie, make sure it has a stabilizer in it to maintain recommended beverage consistency
 - There is a brand of ice cream available online only that melts to a pudding consistency and is allowed for patients on thickened liquids

Thickened Liquids



Resources

- Blog with how-to videos and recipes
 - <https://dysphagiasolutions.wordpress.com/category/cooking/>
- Thickening nutritional supplements
 - <https://dysphagiasolutions.wordpress.com/2016/04/01/tips-for-thickening-nutritional-supplements/>
- National Foundation of Swallowing Disorders
 - www.swallowingdisorderfoundation.com/
- Dysphagia products
 - <https://www.dysphagia-diet.com/>
- Video on thickening liquids
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBqjjCU2DOI>